

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the paragraphs from page 1, line 13 to page 2, line 11 as follows:

In deep sea drilling operations, huge quantities of drill cuttings can accumulate around a drilling rig. A growing awareness of the environmental impact of these drill cuttings has resulted in regulations requiring their removal and treatment. However these drill cuttings tend to agglomerate and are difficult to remove quickly and efficiently. The inventors have devised a method of fluidising settled solids, in order to cause the solids to form a slurry which can be removed from the sea bed for treatment, storage or transport. In order to improve the ~~efficiently~~ efficiency of the process, it has been proposed that once the drill cuttings have been fluidised, they are transported to shore or into a vessel in a continuous or batch process, so that the rate at which the drill cuttings can be removed is maximised.

In an alternative application, it may be desirable to drain a tank containing for example toxic and/or radio active waste with both liquid and solid constituents. For example it may be that ~~that~~ the original storage tank has corroded, or the contents are to be removed for treatment. In this application, it is clearly important that the contents of the tank are contained at all times and that the volume of material which is transferred is minimised while still providing sufficient disturbance of the solids in the tank to ensure complete suspension of the solids and controlled emptying of the tank. Alternatively, it may be desirable to remove the solids/sludge from the bottom of the tank, without overly disturbing the fine solids, and in particular without adding to or subtracting from the volume of liquid in the tank, thus ensuring that the required liquid level in the tank is maintained. This has particular relevance when the liquid level above the solids acts as a radiation shield.

Please amend the paragraph from page 6, line 29 to page 7, line 5 as follows:

Referring to the drawing, a tank of waste 2 containing both liquid and solid constituents is to be emptied into a slurry discharge pipeline 4 via an intermediate vessel and a hydro transport vessel 8. Fluidising units 10, 12 are provided in the tank 2 and hydro transport vessel 8. Each fluidising unit 10, 12 ~~comprises~~ comprises a flow chamber 14, 16 which imparts a swirling flow to fluid which is forced into the flow chamber 14, 16 under pressure, and a discharge opening 18, 20 through which suspended solids, which have been fluidised by the fluidising units 10, 12, exit the tank 2 and hydro transport vessel 8, respectively as a controlled slurry.